

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 and 13-20 are pending. Claims 1, 9, 10, 11, and 16 have been amended. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration and allowance of the above-referenced application are respectfully requested.

Allowable Claims:

The indication of allowable subject matter in claims 10 and 11 is acknowledged and appreciated. Claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form as suggested in the official action. Claim 11 has been amended as well to conform to amended claim 10. These claims should now be in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections:

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Levitan (EP 0605872). Claims 9, 13 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Gaertner (5,996,063). Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Levitan. Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Levitan in view of Gschwind (6,189,088). Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Levitan in view of Tran (6,003,128). Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Gaertner in view of Levitan. Claims 16-17 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Levitan in view of Hennessy. Claims 18 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Levitan in view of Hennessy, and further in view of Nakada (5,638,526). These contentions are respectfully traversed.

The official actions states that the term "stages", as used in the claims, may be viewed as cycles within a system rather than physical hardware regions in a processor pipeline. Independent claims 1, 9, and 16 have been amended to clarify that the stages comprise hardware stages, and that data passes between at least two of the stages during a cycle. Thus, the claimed stages cannot be equated with processing cycles.

In view of this clarifying amendment, independent claims 1, 9, and 16 should now be in condition for allowance. Dependent claims 2-8, 13-15, and 17-20 are patentable based on the above arguments and their own merits. For example, with respect to claim 7, the art of record fails to teach or suggest "adjusting the register by an amount determined by a counter residing in the stage where the termination occurred", as claimed. Moreover, it is improper hindsight analysis to suggest that this claimed feature would have been obvious because of the advantage it provides, when neither the feature nor the advantage are discussed in the single reference being used for the rejection.

It is respectfully suggested for all of these reasons, that the current rejection is totally overcome; that none of the cited art teaches or suggests the features which are claimed, and therefore that all of these claims should be in condition for allowance. A formal notice of allowance is thus respectfully requested.

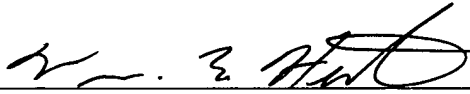
Additionally, it is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that issue or comment. Because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with

regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

Enclosed is a check for \$86.00 for excess claim fees. Please charge any other necessary charges or credits, to Deposit Account No. 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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